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The Women in My Family

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The Women in My Family

— Christine Le

They didn't dare bleed before marriage,
I could tell by the pinkness
that lingered in their cheeks,
as if the Eastern sun had set in them.

They've stopped being virgins
yet their heads loiter in innocence.
They dream of becoming orchids
someday, the white kind
closing its petals
only to be plucked by a child wise
enough to have never loitered in innocence.

You can tell they don't dare to give head,
their mouths and minds aren't made for such labor.
Instead, these creatures lie soundless and still,
being the orchid with its long, lazy leaves spread.